

Remarks to the Community in Denver

October 30, 1996

The President. Thank you. Thank you. Wow! Hello Denver! Can you keep this up until Tuesday? [Applause] Let's give Katherine Diamond another hand. She was fabulous. Thank you very much. [Applause]

Thank you, Governor Romer, for your friendship and your leadership. I said the other day and I said just a few moments ago at another event, I think if you took an honest poll among all the Governors in this country, they would tell you, by reason of intellect, vision, and accomplishment, Roy Romer is the most outstanding public servant in the Governor's office in America today.

Thank you, Mayor Webb, and thank you for writing him in, because he's a great mayor, and I'm honored to be his friend.

Thank you, Diana DeGette, for being willing to go to Congress, and thank you for sending her. We need her there. Congressman Skaggs, thank you for being here. Lieutenant Governor Schoettler, Bess Strickland, thank you for being here. Tom's over at another one of those debates he's having, and I bet he's winning. But you have to help him win on Tuesday. Will you do that? [Applause]

I want to thank Shawn Kelley and Richie Sambora and the Samples for their music. I want to thank the Denver Broncos who came here tonight and wish them well on the rest of a great season. And I want to thank Mark Jackson for being here tonight. We could use a few of his moves between now and Tuesday. Give Mark Jackson a hand. He's a great player and a great citizen. And I want to say a special word of thanks to Bill Ritter for his support of our anticrime initiatives and ask you for his support.

Folks, in 1992, when Al Gore and I came here and we asked the people of Colorado to support us, I felt a special kinship to this State, which I had been visiting for many years as a private citizen. And I always felt that Colorado represented all the cauldron of things that are happening in America a little bit ahead of time, that you were on the cutting edge of the future, that you were embracing the future, but that you were also dealing with the conflicts that bedevil us all

and that threaten to divide us and take us back.

I always felt that here people had a good old-fashioned conservative sense that there were some things the Government ought not to do and mess with, and that that gave some of our opponents on the other side an unusual and often unfair advantage in the rhetoric of these elections. And I told you that if you gave us a chance to serve, I would pursue my vision for the 21st century with a simple strategy. I want us to go into that next century 4 years from now with the American dream alive and well for every person who's responsible to work for it.

I want us to continue to lead the world for peace and freedom and prosperity. And I've had to make some decisions I know were unpopular at the time to stand up for those ideals in Bosnia and Haiti, to keep working in the Middle East and Northern Ireland. But we are standing up for peace and freedom and there's not a single Russian missile pointed at an American child tonight in part because of what we are doing.

And look around this room tonight—I wanted us to stand against those forces that are gripping the rest of the world, of racial and ethnic and tribal and religious hatred and division, and say, “All we want in America is for everybody to agree on the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, the Declaration of Independence and be a good citizen, and you're part of our America. We like our diversity. We're coming together.”

I look out here tonight, I see Latino-Americans and African-Americans and Asian-Americans and Arab-Americans and Irish- and Polish- and Italian-Americans, and I think it's good. And I want more of it. And I want us to learn every day a little more about how we're going to live together. And we have worked hard to create more opportunity, to insist on more responsibility, and to build an American community where everybody has a seat at the table and a role to play.

Now, 4 years ago, you took us on faith. But now there's a record. And we're better off than we were 4 years ago. This election for President, the election for the Senate, the election for the Congress, fundamentally, they are not elections of party, even though

there are partisan differences. We're going into a great new century. We're undergoing vast changes in the way we work and the way we live.

Let me just give you one example. When I became President, 3 million Americans——

[At this point, there was a disturbance in the audience.]

The President. Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait. Wait a minute, wait——

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Don't boo them. Let them have their say. Now, we heard—if Senator Dole or Congressman Kemp come here, don't you dare do this to them. You let them have their say. Don't do it.

Now, the only reason—the only reason they're screaming is the truth hurts. Those young people back there that are holding those signs, they must not have needed the student loan, because Senator Dole and Congressman Allard voted to cut it.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Now, here's what this is about.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Look, you shouldn't be too upset about that. You know what Mark Twain said about that? He said, "Every dog needs a few fleas." Now, I'll admit, I've had a few more than I wanted. But Mark Twain said, "Every dog needs a few fleas. It keeps him from worrying so much about being a dog."

Now, let me go back to what I was going to say. Here's the big issue—bigger than me or Senator Dole or Mr. Allard or Mr. Strickland. We're on the verge—you can hear me over them. Let them talk.

Bye, folks, we'll see you Tuesday. Bye-bye. Thank you.

Now, we've had a lot of fun tonight, but this is really serious. This election, here's what's at stake. All these debates and these fights over the budget and the environment and all this stuff, it comes down to two big ideas: Do you believe that we should go into this new century with all these dramatic changes by doing what they believe when they're talking in a sound voice, and saying,

"You're on your own," or do you believe that, as a person I'm reasonably close to once said, "It takes a village to raise our children and to go forward?" That's the issue.

Do you believe that we should say, "There's the future out there. Now, there's a big running river between here and there, and there's a deep valley, and there's a huge mountain, and I hope you get there?" Or would you like to build a big, wide bridge that we can all walk across together? That's what this is about. That's what this is about.

And all the specific issues, if you think about that, that's what it's about. It is not about big, oppressive Government. Our administration, under the leadership of Vice President Gore, has reduced the size of the Government to its smallest point since John Kennedy was President. We have eliminated more Government regulations and more Government programs, and we've privatized more Government operations that belong in the private sector than my two Republican predecessors did put together. It is not about that.

But what we believe is that there are some things we should do together. I think this is a better country because we've got hundreds of thousands more children in Head Start. I think this is a better country because we work with Roy Romer and other Governors to give States the ability to set high standards and to promote reforms like that charter school right there, that they've got a sign up.

I think this is a better country because we had the biggest increase in Pell grants in 20 years and because we lowered the cost of college loans and improved the repayment terms. I believe it's a better country. I believe we're a better country because we set aside 1.7 million acres in southern Utah for the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. I believe it's a better country.

I believe it's a better country because we passed the family and medical leave law and 12 million people got to take some time off from work when a baby was born or a family member was sick. I believe it's a better country because we passed a crime bill, and we're putting 100,000 more police on the street. I believe it's a better country.

I believe it's a better country because we've doubled the number of children who are getting the message from D.A.R.E. officers and others through the safe and drug-free schools program that drugs can kill you and they're wrong and you should stay away from them. I think it's a better country because we did that.

And you have to decide whether you don't believe we should have joined together as a people and done those things together and whether you believe the ideas we have for the future are right or wrong. But it all comes down to whether you think we're all in this together, we're better off, each of us, individually, and our families and our communities when we work together to help everybody have the tools to make the most of their own lives and live up to their God-given potential. That is the great issue in this election. That is the great issue in this election.

You have some evidence about which works. We've got 10½ million more jobs, the biggest decline in inequality among working families in 27 years, the biggest drop in child poverty in 20 years, record numbers of new small businesses in every year, record numbers of new businesses owned by women and minorities in the history of America. You have some evidence. We have record exports. The welfare rolls have declined by 1.9 million. The crime rate has gone down for 4 years in a row; it's at a 10-year low in the United States. It's not like there's no evidence. You have evidence now. This country is on the right track to the 21st century, and we need to keep going.

When I told you before that it's not a matter of party, I meant it. There was a time, under Abraham Lincoln, when the Republican Party believed that we had to go forward together, and we couldn't live with the lie of slavery anymore. It was a lie. It defied all the values of the Constitution. There was a time when the Republican Party, under Theodore Roosevelt, believed that we could not become a great industrial nation and forget about the importance of protecting small business and working people through free enterprise and maintaining competition and protecting innocent children from being forced to work 70 hours a week in coal mines and in beginning the work of conserving our

great natural resources with the Grand Canyon and other things that Theodore Roosevelt did. This does not have to be a matter of party.

But if you look at what they did when their philosophy controlled—what Mr. Allard did, Tom Strickland's opponent, and Mr. Gingrich did, and my opponent did—they passed a budget that had the first education cuts in modern history. They cut college loans and cut Head Start. They passed a budget that would have paralyzed our ability to protect the environment and to enforce the environmental laws. They passed a budget that would have for the first time in 30 years taken away the guarantee of health care to our poorest children, to middle class families that have family members with disabilities—but because they get a little help they can go on being middle class families and support themselves and their loved ones in dignity. They would have repealed the standards on quality nursing home care as oppressive Government. That was their idea of being conservative. That was their idea.

They opposed the crime bill. They said we were going to take people's guns away from them in Colorado. Folks, they didn't know then, but we've got 2 years now; we know who was telling the truth. There's not a single Colorado hunter that's lost a rifle, but 60,000 felons, fugitives, and stalkers have not gotten handguns because of the Brady bill. We know what happened.

So I don't want you—I don't vote here. I can't stand up here and ask you to vote for Tom Strickland because he's a Democrat. But I can do this: I can tell you that he believes, as I do, that we have an obligation to bring our people together and to move forward together. You heard what Diana DeGette said when she was up here speaking. I know Bill Ritter has supported our anticrime strategy and so has Wellington Webb, and that's why you've had some of the success you've had here. And this is not so much about liberal or conservative or Republican or Democrat. It's whether you believe that there are some things that we must do together if we want the 21st century to be the greatest age of possibility in human history.

I loved it when Wellington said, a few minutes ago, that he was talking to some of his friends and supporters and he said, "I didn't get there alone, you put me there." And he mentioned that old rural saying that I was raised with, "If you see a frog on a fence post, chances are it didn't get there by accident." [Laughter] You know, I've heard all these people get up here and run for office and talk about how much they've achieved through their own effort. And most of us who run for office would like you to believe we were born in a log cabin we built ourselves. [Laughter] But the truth is, success in life requires both individual effort and responsibility, a loving family, a loving community, a supportive nation, people trying to help each other to move forward together, and we're all stronger when we do that. And that's what this is about.

And that's what it's about for the next 4 years. When you go home tonight, every one of you, especially the young people, I want you to ask yourself this question before you turn in. Just ask yourself and see if you can answer in a minute or two, "What do I want my country to be like when we cross that bridge into the 21st century? What do I want my country to be like when I have children and they are my age? What do I want them to feel about America? What do I want the feel of America to be? What do I want the position of my country in the world to be?"

If you ask the right question, and if America asks the right question on Tuesday, we'll get the right answer. The only way we won't get it is if we don't ask the right question.

Now, I want to build a bridge to the 21st century where we go on and balance the budget, because if we get interest rates down we'll have more jobs, more incomes, and more opportunities. But I know we can do it, and I've submitted a plan to do it that protects education and the environment and research and technology and Medicare and Medicaid. And I want you to help me build that bridge. Will you do that? [Applause]

I like the family and medical leave law, and I think we should be doing more to help people succeed at home and at work. I can tell you young people who are here, who don't have kids yet, the single thing I hear most from parents all over America is—

whether they're low-income working people, middle class people, or even people with comfortable incomes—is they're spending more hours at work than ever before, and they are worried that they won't be able to succeed at their most important job—I was so glad to hear Katherine say that—their most important job, raising their kids and succeed at work. We can't make Americans make that choice, we have to be able to do both.

So I like the family and medical leave law, and I want to expand it. I want to say you can take a little time off from work to go see your children's teachers twice a year and take your kids to the doctor without losing your job. I want to say, if you work overtime because you need to or because you have to, and a family emergency comes up, you ought to be able to decide whether to take that overtime in pay or in time with your family. It ought to be your decision because that will make us a stronger country. Will you help me build that bridge to the 21st century? [Applause]

We've now said to the American people, the beginnings of health care reform—you can't lose your health insurance anymore just because you changed jobs or because somebody in your family's been sick. A mother and a newborn baby cannot be forced out of a hospital anymore by an insurance company after 24 hours.

We made a beginning. But I want to do more. Our balanced budget plan gives help to families that are between jobs so they can keep their health insurance for 6 more months. It adds another million children to the ranks of the insured. It gives free mammograms to women on Medicare.

It gives—there are over 1½ million families in this country today doing a brave and good and honorable thing, caring for a family member with Alzheimer's. It is a very hard thing. I've lost an aunt and an uncle. I can tell you, it is a loving thing; it is a debilitating thing. Our balanced budget plan gives respite care support to those families who are caring for their family members. Will you help us build that bridge to the 21st century? [Applause]

We've done a lot of work on this crime issue. But we're only halfway home. Our op-

ponents, including Congressman Allard, not only voted against putting 100,000 police on the street, they passed a budget that would have stopped it. And when I vetoed their budget, they shut the Government down and tried to force us to do it. And when we said no, we fought it again and again. You have a choice to make.

We need to finish the job. We need to finish the job. We need to go after these violent gangs that are killing our children and corrupting them. We need to keep fighting until we whip this problem for good. I want you to help me build that bridge to the 21st century where everyone feels safe on their streets, in their schools, in their neighborhoods, in their parks. Will you do that? [Applause]

We have taken millions of pounds of poisonous chemicals out of the air. We have raised the standards for drinking water. We have raised the standards for food. We have cleaned up more toxic waste dumps in 3 years than they did in 12. We are lifting the quality of our environment, and our economy is not hurting from it; it's generating new jobs and new opportunities.

There is much, much more to be done. I'll just give you one example. Ten million American children still live within just 4 miles of a toxic waste site. If you will give us 4 more years, we'll clean up the 500 worst ones and our kids will be growing up next to parks, not poison. Will you help us build that bridge to the 21st century? [Applause]

The most important issue of all is your education and the education of those coming behind you. There is so much more to be done to raise standards, to promote reform, to bring more children into the Head Start program. There is so much more to be done. Forty percent of our children who are 8 years old, third-graders, still cannot read a book on their own. A lot of it is because they come from other places; their first language is not English. But that will be cold comfort to them if they can't learn as they move on through school.

I have a plan to mobilize 30,000 AmeriCorps and other reading specialists to get them to put together a million volunteers. In this last budget we got 200,000 more work-study slots for college students. I

want—and a lot of you will use these—I want to use 100,000 of those slots for young people to earn their way through college by teaching children to read so that every 8-year-old can say, "I can read this book by myself." Will you help me build that bridge to the 21st century? [Applause]

In 4 more years we can hook every classroom and every library and every school in this country to the Internet, to the World Wide Web, to the whole information superhighway. For the first time ever, all of our children will be able to get the same information in the same way at the same time. It will revolutionize education. Will you help me build that bridge to the 21st century? [Applause]

And finally, we've done a lot to make college more accessible. Ten million young people now have lower cost college loans, and they can pay them back as a percentage of their income instead of being overrun by debt when they get out of college, but we need to do more. I want to make at least 2 years of education after high school as universal in America as a high school diploma is today in the next 4 years. I want to do it by letting Americans deduct dollar for dollar from their tax bill the cost of a typical community college tuition. No bureaucracy, no program, just send people and say, you make your grades, stay in, and you can go to community college for free. You can do it in America.

I want to give every American the right to deduct up to \$10,000 a year for the cost of any college tuition, undergraduate or graduate. I believe families should be able to save for college in an IRA and withdraw from it without any tax penalty if they're using the money to pay for college or health care or a first-time home. Will you help me build that bridge? [Applause]

Between now and Tuesday you may hear someone say that your vote doesn't matter. After you have heard this tonight, do you have something to say back to them? Will you say it? [Applause]

Folks, before I came here today I was in Ypsilanti, Michigan; on the campus of Eastern Michigan University. And I was there at a big conference with 4,000 women business owners. There were three women who pre-

ceded me on the program. I want to tell you about them. One came here as an immigrant from Mexico as a child, of Syrian heritage. Her parents were Syrians living in Mexico. She spoke not a word of English. She got married. She had children. Her husband ran a car dealership. He died suddenly in 1984. She could have sold the business and at least lived comfortably in retirement. Instead, she says, "Maybe I can be a businesswoman." Today that woman owns 5 car dealerships and has 260 employees.

The second, a young woman with very little formal education, was making a living cleaning houses. And she was hitchhiking home one day from a job she had. And the person who was giving her a ride said, "You know, I'm amazed you don't have more work. Everybody I know has got both people in the house working. I bet you could find more jobs." This woman, hitchhiking home from work, had the idea that she would start her own business. She borrowed \$11,000 from one of our programs—\$11,000. Today she runs a house-cleaning business with 29 employees.

The third woman was a former welfare recipient who today owns a construction company. That is America.

And every one of them—every one of them made it on their own, all right. If they hadn't worked hard, if they hadn't had talent, if they hadn't had stick-to-itiveness, if they hadn't been willing to face failure down, they would not have made it. But they also got a little help from their friends, the American people, to work together and make this country a greater place.

I want you to go home tonight and ask yourself this question: What do I want America to look like and how are we going to get there. And I think you will say, we have got to join hands. We've got to build a bridge that is big enough and wide enough and strong enough for all of us to walk across. And if we do it, the best days of this country are still ahead.

Let's go build that bridge between now and Tuesday. Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:52 p.m. at the National Western Events Center. In his remarks, he referred to Katherine Diamond, who intro-

duced the President; Lt. Gov. Gail Schoettler of Colorado; senatorial candidate Tom Strickland and his wife, Bess; Shawn Kelley, lead singer with the Samples; musician Richie Sambora; former NFL Denver Bronco Mark Jackson; and Bill Ritter, Denver district attorney.

Remarks in Arizona State University in Tempe, Arizona

October 31, 1996

Thank you. Hello, Arizona. Good morning. Let's give the band a hand. [Applause] Thank you very much. Are you going to the Rose Bowl? [Applause] Are we going to win on Tuesday? [Applause] I want to thank the people who performed before I came here: the ASU Student Saxophone Combo, the Mariachi del Sur, the Clan/destine, the Tempe High School Marching Band. Again, thank you. And Jeff Goodman. I thank those who spoke earlier, including the students, Sadohana Stone and Michelle Carson, the legislators who were here, the other candidates, the vice mayor. And I want to say to Juan Roque, you're having a great system, and I wish you would play offensive line for me for the next 5 days. Thank you. I thank Governor Rose Mofford, my friend and former colleague. Thank you, Congressman Ed Pastor, Mrs. Pastor. Thank you, Steve Owens, for running for Congress and trying to turn the Congress around and put it back on the side of the American people and their future. Thank you.

Ladies and gentlemen, I want to thank Bill Bratton for coming all the way to Arizona to endorse our candidacy, to be here with Mike Petchell. While Bill Bratton was the police chief of New York, violent crime decreased almost 40 percent, the murder rate was decreased by 50 percent. We can make our streets safer for our children and their future if we all work together. Thank you, Commissioner Bratton, for being here.

Five days from today, the American people will choose the last President of the 20th century and the first President of the 21st century. I am very, very glad that there are so many young people here today because this election is about your future.

You know, there are many different issues in this election, many matters on which Sen-